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Connecticut Criminal Defense  
Lawyers Association  
P.O. Box 1766  
Waterbury, CT 07621  
(860) 283-5070 tel/fax  
[www.ccdla.com](http://www.ccdla.com)

March 30, 2015

Senator Eric Coleman, Co-Chair  
Representative William Tong, Co-Chair  
Judiciary Committee  
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building,  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 7039, An Act Concerning Civil Immigration Detainers**

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and Committee Members:

The CCDLA is a not-for-profit organization of approximately three hundred lawyers who are dedicated to defending persons accused of criminal offenses. Founded in 1988, the CCDLA is the only statewide criminal defense lawyers' organization in Connecticut. An affiliate of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the CCDLA works to improve the criminal justice system by insuring that the individual rights guaranteed by the Connecticut and United States constitutions are applied fairly and equally and that those rights are not diminished.

**The CCDLA strongly supports the passage of House Bill No. 7039, An Act Concerning Civil Immigration Detainers.** This proposal will improve the effectiveness of the Trust Act by strengthening the protections afforded to anyone who is the subject of a civil immigration detainer. The TRUST Act is designed to prevent racial profiling and improve law enforcement's relationship with Connecticut's immigrant communities. This bill will help to fulfill the underlying intent of the legislature by clarifying and enhancing the protocols for the Act's practical application.

As this Committee is aware, building trust between the police and immigrant communities promotes public safety for everyone. With the passage of the TRUST Act in 2013, our legislature recognized that non-citizens must be able to cooperate with police investigations without fear of detention under civil Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainers. This acknowledgement reflects Connecticut's commitment to promoting public safety for everyone in the state and it means that entire immigrant communities now enjoy the same protections under the law as their U.S. citizen neighbors.

As a result of recent federal litigation, local law enforcement agencies are not required to comply with civil detainer requests from ICE and in response to this litigation the Connecticut Department of Corrections (DOC) has limited its detentions and has instituted procedural safeguards to prevent unlawful detentions. Last year DOC revised its policies further and now will only honor an ICE detainer request if it's based on a warrant and not based solely upon non-violent offenses.

This proposal will establish uniformity throughout the state with regard to ICE detainer compliance and will help prevent unlawful detention through its explicit procedural safeguards. The passage of this bill also is critical to strengthening the trust between our immigrant communities and the police because it includes confidentiality protections for anyone who is the subject of a civil immigration detainer.

**The CCDLA strongly supports the passage of H.B. 7039, An Act Concerning Civil Immigration Detainers** for all the reasons stated above. If you have any questions pertaining to this written testimony please feel free to contact me at: 860-655-9434.

Respectfully submitted,



Elisa L. Villa, President

CCDLA